

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR FINANCIAL AID

Federal regulations stipulate that, in order to qualify for any Federal Title IV student aid programs (including Federal Work-Study, Federal Direct/PLUS Loans, and NCFELS Programs), students must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress (SAP). SAP refers to meeting degree requirements according to specific milestones that ensure completion within the designated time frame. There are three criteria for SAP: Qualitative (grades) and Quantitative (pace – time to complete the degree) and Maximum Timeframe.

The chart below outlines the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements for each program, including both the Qualitative and Quantitative guidelines as well as the evaluation period for SAP.

SAP Qualitative Requirement:

For SAP calculations, students must successfully complete courses with grades or evaluations such as CR (Credit), NCR (No Credit), S (Satisfactory), H (Honors), HP (High Pass), P (Pass), LP (Low Pass), or letter grades A, B, or C. Grades that could indicate failure to meet the qualitative SAP requirement include F (Fail), I (Incomplete), or U (Unsatisfactory).

SAP Quantitative Requirement (Pace):

Pace is measured by comparing the cumulative number of credit hours a student has successfully completed to the number of credit hours attempted. Alternatively, pace may be determined by assessing whether the student has completed the number of credit hours required by a specific point in time to ensure on-time program completion within the established maximum timeframe. Students must maintain a minimum pace of 70% or 100% (based on program) to remain eligible for financial aid and to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress.

The standard time for completing the required coursework is set by each program. Students have a designated number of years to finish their program, as specified in the chart below under Maximum Timeframe.

Most programs require students to successfully complete at least 70% of the total credit hours in which they are enrolled. Progress is assessed by dividing the number of successfully completed credits by the number of credits attempted. The chart below details the completion percentage required for each program.

SAP Maximum Timeframe:

The federal government defines the maximum timeframe for degree completion as 150% of the program's published length, measured in credit hours. For example, if a program requires 120 credit hours to graduate, the maximum timeframe would be 180 attempted credit hours ($120 \times 150\%$).

To maintain eligibility for federal financial aid (including loans), students must be able to complete all degree requirements before exceeding this maximum timeframe. If the Financial Aid Office determines at any point that it is mathematically impossible for a student to complete their program within the maximum timeframe, federal aid eligibility must be terminated immediately—not when the limit is reached, but when it is determined it will be exceeded.

The table below provides a breakdown of SAP for each program at the School of Medicine:

Academic Program	Grades Not Making SAP	Minimum GPA required	Successfully Completion Percentage	Program Time Length	Maximum Timeframe	SAP Evaluated Period
Biostatistics	F, I	Students must also maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.70	70%	2 years	3.5 years	annually
Biomedical Sciences	F, I	Students are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 1.60 and cannot receive more than one F grade.	70%	1 year	1 year	after each payment period
Cardiac Ultrasound Peds Certificate	F	Students cannot receive more than 1 F Grade	100%	1 year	2.5 years	after each payment period
Cardiac Ultrasound Certificate	F	Students cannot receive more than 1 F Grade	100%	1 year	1 year	after each payment period
Doctor of Medicine	F,I,U,NCR	Successful completion of a course for all students. Student must earn a grade of Credit (Cr), Pass (P), Satisfactory (S) or better.	100%	4 years	6 years	annually
MD/MBA Dual Degree		Years 4 and 5 will be evaluated by the SOM F/A office with the same criteria listed above for MED Programs				annually
Doctor Occupational Therapy	F	Students cannot receive an F Grade and must pass each year fieldwork to continue to the next year	100%	3 years	4.5 years	annually
Ophthalmic Medical Technician	F	Minimum of C Grade	100%	1 year	1 year	after each payment period
Orthoptist Training Certificate				2,000 hours minimum over 2 years		
Doctor of Physical Therapy	F	Students cannot receive an F Grade and cannot have more than one LP grade in all courses	100%	3 years	4.5 years	annually
MMCI Informatics Certificate	F, I, W	Students cannot receive an F Grade or more than 2 L Grades	100%	1 year	1 year	after each payment period
MMCI-Clinical Informatics	F, I, W	Students cannot receive an F Grade or more than 2 L Grades	100%	1 year	1 year	after each payment period
Pathologists' Assistant		Students cannot receive more than 1 LP Grade,		2 years	3.5 years	annually
Physician Assistant	U	Students cannot fail any courses in the PA year 1. In the PA 2nd year - cannot fail more than 1 course. No student can fail no more than 2 courses in the PA program.	100%	2 years	3.5 years	annually

*for LOA policies and completion requirements, please refer to the School of Medicine Bulletin

Monitoring Academic Progress and Loss of Title IV Aid Eligibility

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is reviewed annually after grades are posted at the end of each program's academic year. A student who does not meet any of the SAP standards outlined above will lose eligibility for Title IV federal aid until they either meet the SAP requirements again or submit an appeal that is approved. Students are encouraged to regularly review their grades and compare them to the criteria established in the SAP Policy to assess whether they are meeting the required standards. Those not meeting these requirements will be notified via their Duke email account.

Students will have 3 business days to notify the financial aid office of their intent to appeal or not to appeal.

The Appeal Process

Students who lose eligibility for Title IV aid can appeal the decision if they believe there are extraordinary circumstances that prevented them from meeting SAP standards. To initiate an appeal, the student must submit a letter, either in writing or by email, to the financial aid office. The office will then forward the appeal to the SAP Title IV committee. While a letter of support from the student's academic dean is helpful, it is not required. Additional documentation, such as letters from medical professionals, counselors, or other non-family third-party professionals familiar with the situation, may also be submitted to support the appeal. The students should also explain what changes in their circumstances will enable them to meet SAP requirements in the next review period.

The appeal documentation will be reviewed by the committee, which will decide whether the students' eligibility for Title IV aid can be reinstated. This review process may take up to 2 weeks, and the decision made by the SAP Title IV Committee is final. Students will receive notification of the decision via their Duke email account.

Students who meet the academic progress requirements during their probationary period will return to good standing and will be evaluated again at the end of the subsequent year.

Treatment of Courses

- Incomplete "I" grades will be changed to completed once a grade is applied. Until a grade is applied, "I" grades are not included in the qualitative review. Incompleteness is counted in the number of courses attempted when calculating the quantitative component or completion rate.
- W grades are excluded from the qualitative review but are included in the quantitative review or calculation of the completion rate.

Treatment of Repeat Coursework

Repeat Coursework

Students may receive federal financial aid funding to repeat a course in which they received a failing grade or from which they withdrew. Repeat of a course may only be funded once. Only the higher grade will be included in the qualitative review, but all attempts are included in the calculation of the completion rate.